

Cast:

Cathy Mason  
Rachel Mason  
Rosie Dempsey  
Nicola Dempsey

[I Wish I Was An Only Child Theme Song]

Cathy: Stop adding your stuff.

Rachel: No OK sorry. It's always good to try ideas and then fucking slate them.

Cathy: No it's really not.

Rachel: I have no problem with that. It's all about letting go, speaking.

Cathy: Your workshopping is horrific.

Rachel: I know it's awful.

Cathy: I know.

Rachel: But you've got to try.

Cathy: Why at the end of every sentence do I go like that?

Rachel: Yeah right.

Cathy: Rach you're really fucking narky.

Rachel: I'm irritabated, irritabated with you [chuckles] I'm irritabated.

Cathy: Yeah go on.

Rachel: Welcome to I Wish I Was An Only Child, where we Cath...

Cathy: That's me.

Rachel: And me, Rachel Mason, speak to other siblings about the dynamic of their relationship so we can see where we're going wrong.

Cathy: This week we spoke to Nicola and Rosie Dempsey.

Rachel: Better known as musical comedy duo Flo & Joan. Cath obviously kept trying to ally with one of them...

Cathy: [Laughs]

Rachel: ...which is her way. So every time we speak to someone Cath says 'Yes you are me, you are me'.

Cathy: No.

Rachel: But I know I felt we were a fair mix. When you were saying about getting men, you said...

Cathy: I'd never say that. 'Getting men'?

Rachel: Uh I think it was...

Cathy: [Laughs] Sorry, when you were talking about getting men. But why at the end of every time I say anything, I go like that [laughs].

Rachel: All right.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Rachel: Who's the funniest?

Nicola: Oh!

Rosie: You make me laugh the most. You're like on paper you're the funniest.

Nicola: I'm the driest but when the ideas I pitch are the most unfunniest. Rosie is more fun than I am, and I'm like more dry funny.

- Rosie: I'm funner yeah. You're cleverer, you write jokes. I can't sit and write a joke, I don't know how to do it but I can be like, 'Oh on stage if we say it like this, it will be funny'.
- Nicola: Mm-hmm.
- Rachel: So you complement each other perfectly is what you're saying?
- Rosie: I think so it's embarrassing to say it but I think that's sort of what happens.
- Rachel: Yeah and I bet you don't say it to each other.
- Rosie: No.
- Nicola: No.
- Rachel: Because we certainly never complement each other. No.
- Cathy: [Laughs]
- Nicola: No way.
- Cathy: I'm definitely the funniest.
- Rachel: Definitely yeah. And I'm definitely the most irritated.
- Nicola: [Laughs]
- Rachel: So that's really interesting because you just immediately both said...
- Nicola: The other.
- Rachel: Yeah. Or you're just very polite.
- Nicola: I mean I don't think we're particularly, we're not polite about each other I don't think.
- Rosie: No we'll definitely tell each other when they're not funny.
- Nicola: And I think that's probably why we know our strengths and weaknesses it's because we're both like, this thing needs to happen now. I'll take it and I'll be like 'I'll write

that' and then we just sort of know who is better at what really.

Rosie: Yeah.

Cathy: But do you ever just sit down and cry laughing? And I'm not talking about work, just throughout your life, do you just get stuff that nobody else gets between you?

Nicola: Oh 100%.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: And then we try and turn it into a song or whatever and then an audience thinks, you're absolutely out of your fucking mind. They then don't laugh and it either makes you laugh more because you're like, oh this is really embarrassing that we find this, we'll like try new material in front of like our housemates or whatever just to try and like try and get a gauge on if it's OK. And we'll be like crying not being able to get through a song. And they're like 'Cool do you want a tea?'

Rosie: [Laughs]

Nicola: And we'll just leave, like it's really excruciating.

Cathy: Yeah?

Nicola: Yeah.

Cathy: But how did that work when you were younger? Did you make each other laugh a lot when you were younger or did you hate each other like we did?

Rosie: I've tried to think about this a lot and there were definitely moments when I have hated you so much.

Nicola: Mm-hmm.

Rosie: Like wanted to destroy you.

Nicola: Mm-hmm.

Rosie: But I think a lot of our laughter came from making fun of our mum [laughs]. I think at the dinner table probably making fun of her.

Nicola: Yeah.

Rosie: When we were teenagers...

Nicola: I think we were just like pretty indifferent to each other.

Rosie: Yeah.

Rachel: What's the age difference?

Nicola: Just two years so it's not very much.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: We're just really different so we didn't really cross paths.

Rosie: I feel like we'd make each other laugh though.

Nicola: Yeah but it wouldn't be, we weren't best friends and we weren't like, it wasn't intentional I think.

Rosie: I don't know if I ever found you funny actually.

Nicola: Thanks. [Laughs]

Rachel: So were you at different schools? Did you have different friends?

Nicola: Well we were at the same school, but definitely different friends.

Rosie: We might have like a little crossover? Actually no, we had no crossover.

Nicola: No.

Rosie: No.

Nicola: Rosie was very cool and so I was like incredibly intimidated by all her friends.

Cathy: Oh you are so me!

Nicola: [Laughs]

Cathy: Absolutely amazing.

Nicola: And that goes through to like all of your university friends as well.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: They're all like really, really nice people but just really cool and so I just didn't ever dare go anywhere near them.

Cathy: And did more people fancy her? Like we have that situation, yeah?

Nicola: Oh, I think so.

Rosie: I don't know though because I think I was sort of like the weird one of the cool group. So I was never like the fancy person. I was always the one that the boyfriends would come and have a laugh with when they got bored of their boring girlfriends. Because I didn't really date anyone at school.

Nicola: No.

Rosie: Yeah, I mean we probably both had similar success or failure in that.

Nicola: Yeah. We were never the hot girl on campus.

Rosie: Never the Olson twins on campus you know?

Nicola: No [laughs].

Cathy: Rachel was, I wasn't.

Rachel: No, no, no.

Cathy: So describe each other, describe each other.

Rachel: In a nutshell.

Rosie: Right like as now or?

Rachel: Now.

Rosie: Now. Um bookish, smart, dry, funny.

Rachel: Nice, lovely, lovely. Nicola can you describe Rosie in a nutshell?

Nicola: Fun, sociable, like very personable and...

Rosie: Do a bad one.

Nicola: What so that you feel better about calling me basically a nerd?

Rosie: I said 'bookish' bookish is a lovely way to describe a nerd I feel.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rosie: And you are bookish.

Nicola: OK. Sociable, fun, um? Funny. Um? And...

Rosie: [Laughs]

Nicola: Can I just say three?

Rachel: Yeah.

Nicola: I feel we don't have to do a word for a word.

Cathy: Is there anything that you're covering up? Are either of you being nice or do you think you could say something horrible to the other person?

Nicola: We like argue, oh and stubborn, but we're both really stubborn.

Rosie: Oh yeah we're both stubborn yeah.

Nicola: So I think that's probably the thing we hate the most in each other. And we like really hate that in each other, but we also have it so you're like great.

Cathy: So how does that work?

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: How do you get anything done?

Rosie: You choose the hills that you're willing to die on. A lot of it is like, 'I don't want to argue about that anymore, you win that one, let's move on'.

Nicola: And then you pocket it for an I told you so moment later on down the line.

Rosie: [Laughs] Yeah.

Nicola: You store it. I'm sure both of us have got a nice little bank of like, I fucking told you that wasn't going to work. Or I knew this was going to happen.

Rosie: Yeah.

Cathy: So neither of you is in charge and in control of everything and basically gets their own way the whole time?

Nicola: No.

Rosie: Not really.

Nicola: I wouldn't say so.

Rachel: I love how you simplify it because that's basically how it works with us.

All: [Laughs]

Nicola: Who's the bitch?

Rosie: Who is in charge with you two?

Nicola: Yeah.

Cathy: Well who do you think?

Rachel: Definitely. See how the next few minutes unfold. So you were indifferent, the word you used was indifferent to each other growing up. So when did you come back together? Because obviously music is a theme for you but

how did you get closer, come back together and end up working together?

Nicola: I think when we went away to uni, because you went to London and I went to Cardiff. And I think then you sort of realise like oh we're quite, we don't love each other. Like we sort of say it in shows 'We're not best friends' and we do mean like we're not best friends, like it's not a bit. But I think you move away and then you're like, I sort of miss that person that I lived with for 18 years or whatever. So I think we sort of got a little bit closer then. And we both like the theatre and musicals and stuff so we'd do those things together in a way that our friends probably didn't like it as much as we did so that was a nice bonding thing.

Rosie: Yeah or like weird TV stuff or weird shows and stuff that I hadn't found the friends at uni yet who I could share that stuff with but I'm like, I know Nicola will love this.

Nicola: Mm.

Rosie: And then you sort of miss that reference point person a little bit. Our tastes were always quite similar. We were watching the same comedy and wanting to see the same stuff and listening to similar music so that you were like the person who you could share those fun bits with but you hadn't found anyone else to do with yet at uni.

Nicola: Yeah and then I moved to Toronto and Rosie came out to join me, and we just ended up living together because we didn't know anyone else, so we were like well it makes sense to just live together. And that was sort of when we started working together as well.

Cathy: Hang on, Rosie why did you follow her?

Nicola: Yeah good question.

Cathy: I mean seriously. That's quite a long follow yeah.

Rosie: Yeah that is a long follow.

Nicola: That's not just, you were the same top as me. That's why are you living in the same country as me?

Rosie: Yeah I left uni and I didn't know what to do so I just worked for a year, and then earned money in a pub. And I was supposed to go travelling with friends, but that fell through. So I had like an itch where I wanted to not be in England. And Nicola was doing courses with the Second City. Do you know the Second City?

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: Yeah.

Rosie: Yeah she did some courses out there and it just looked like so much fun. I applied for a few drama schools but just didn't quite know what I was doing and didn't turn up to a couple-- I was just a bit lost and I just didn't know really how you do monologues in auditions, I just didn't. So like that kind of bit of it just passed me by, but I'd always had a little itch to do performing and stuff. And then you were at this school that allowed you to do performing and comedy stuff and improv and stuff, it just looked really fun like Whose Line Is It Anyway? kind of stuff. And I thought, I could definitely try that. I've got money to spend, I've got nothing holding me in England. We didn't go at the same time, we went separately.

Nicola: Yeah.

Rosie: So you did three months in Chicago. And then you left and I did a few months in Chicago and then met you in Toronto. But I'd never planned to stay in Toronto. Because I still just sort of had my summer suitcase and went out to visit you and was probably going to go home and then I think I just got to Toronto and was like, I'll just stay. I've literally got nothing to come home for, I'll stay. I stayed in an Airbnb for a month I think?

Cathy: But you weren't going to be with Nicola were you? You were doing it for your own thing? Because I would just follow Rach basically.

Rachel: Yeah [laughs].

Cathy: And Nicola, were you pissed off? Was it irritating that she was there? Or were you pleased or?

Rachel: Have you ever talked about this?

Nicola: I think we have. I think Rosie is a better actor than I am. I'm not an actor. I went to learn how to write, I wanted to be a TV writer. So I went and did like improv and stuff and was like, oh I know this is not where my skills lie. Like I enjoyed it but I wasn't going to be a professional at it. But I knew that Rosie would enjoy it because she's funny and she's a good actor. So it was just one of those. And I just really enjoyed it and was like 'You'll have a fucking great time. And your other option is to go to Thailand with your friends which is like'.

Rosie: I'm glad I didn't do that.

Nicola: Yeah. So at that point you're like well if you're not going to stay then like do it and it will be fun and then see you later. So I wasn't like, I was never angry at it. There's always that little bit where you're like, oh she's better than me, oh she's a lot better than me at improv. At improv you were.

Rosie: Oh yeah at improv but I couldn't write a sketch.

Nicola: And also I'm like self-aware enough to know that, it was not like this was my thing, like I'm not an idiot, I know I'm not a good actor, so I can't be annoyed at someone who is better at acting than me.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Cathy: Neither of you are dependent on each other are you? That's what it sounds like, you're both quite self-contained.

Rosie: Yeah I would say.

Nicola: I think so. We're definitely like separate enough.

Rachel: But you sort of are dependent on each other now because you've got this.

Nicola: 100%.

Rosie: We're contractually obliged to be dependent on each other.

Nicola: Yeah [laughs].

Rachel: Exactly. And how does that feel in terms of being a double act? Do you ever worry that the other one might decide that they don't want to do it anymore?

Rosie: I have thought about this because...

Nicola: Wait what?

Rosie: [Laughs] I was like , if we stopped doing this, you'd just go and be a comedy writer because that's what you're good at.

Nicola: And you'd be an actor.

Rosie: I'd probably try and do, I think I'd struggle a lot more because it's a lot more difficult and I don't quite have enough of the skills to back me up yet. But also, this is a cheesy thing to say but I love everything that she writes, so I would be excited that you're doing something that I can also enjoy at the same time.

Nicola: Mm yeah.

Rachel: And also she could write the sitcom that you could star in.

Rosie: Yeah.

Rachel: So it could be perfect.

Rosie: Yeah let's get that in writing and let's get on with it.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rachel: But what happens if you've got a gig or whatever and you have a massive row? You're saying you're both really stubborn, have you had situations, you must have had situations where you...

Cathy: The reason we're doing this podcast is so many people said to us 'How can you work with your sister?'

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: People would either say 'Oh my God, it's the best thing ever'. And I'm sure you get this. Or 'I would rather die than work with my sibling'.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: Yeah, I get that more than anything.

Cathy: Yeah so...

Rachel: And we're just fascinated because our relationship is really intense.

Cathy: It's so fucked up. It's fucked.

Rachel: It's dysfunctional. It's intense. We're finding this out more and more.

Cathy: Yeah.

Rachel: And so it's really interesting talking to all these you know different siblings.

Cathy: We keep coming across people that just get on and it's all fine, and I can't cope with it.

Rosie: We definitely don't. Not all the time.

- Cathy: But do you find that you have like shorthand with each other and you can tell each other to like 'fuck off'.
- Rosie: Yeah.
- Nicola: Totally, totally.
- Rachel: Yeah. But it's usually 'We've got a meeting' and Cath's like 'We're not doing it'. [Laughs] So I'm like 'We've got a meeting in like an hour' 'Well I'm not fucking doing it' because you know we have this constant, yeah, no exactly that will be edited out.
- Nicola: [Laughs]
- Rosie: But then it gets shit done as well though and you can be like 'Don't want do it, do want to do it' and you don't have to worry about having to find another person that you would do the business with or whatever.
- Rachel: Yeah.
- Rosie: You're always going to be sisters. The worst case scenario is you don't talk to each other ever again but.
- Cathy: So why don't you just walk away and see? I don't know if you're in relationships, if you are, would you slag the hell off out of the other person to your other half?
- Rachel: Why would you ask that?
- Cathy: Because I do.
- Rachel: I know. I know.
- Rosie: [Laughs]
- Nicola: Recently we were having a discussion about something and it was during lockdown and we don't live together. So it was from two separate places. And it was the first time I slammed the laptop in the middle of a conversation and was just like 'Fuck you' and slammed it.

And then afterwards, I'm stubborn and I was like well obviously it was her fucking fault and I'm not fixing this.

Rosie: It wasn't my fault.

Nicola: It was.

Rachel: And then what happened? How did it resolve?

Nicola: I think we usually just send a text and be like 'I'm sorry, let's not get to that point again'. We will, but like at that point you're just like, we're drawing a line under this because we'll never move past it.

Cathy: Are you affectionate with each other?

Nicola: No.

Cathy: Right, see that's the same as us. You would never hug each other?

Nicola: I don't think we've ever hugged each other.

Rosie: No.

Nicola: Or there will be an occasion every now and again where you'll say 'Do you want to hug?'

Rachel: Aww.

Nicola: Because she'll look like she needs a hug. But in either situation we'll both be like 'No'.

Rosie: No. I feel like there's a couple of times where we've hugged before a show or we've hugged after a show. Earlier on though. We definitely wouldn't, maximum two times that might have happened.

Nicola: And we've had like big gigs where afterwards you think like, you'd hug the person. Oh we've just done this amazing fucking thing. And we're just like 'Cool well done' [laughs].

Cathy: But you never say 'I love you'? Because we would never say that.

Nicola: Oh Jesus no.

Rosie: No.

Nicola: That makes me feel sick.

Cathy: Even this is making me sweat.

Nicola: I know.

Rachel: Yeah.

Nicola: I know. I know.

Rosie: Yeah I find siblings who are overly affectionate extremely scary.

Nicola: And embarrassing.

Rosie: I don't understand siblings who hug.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Cathy: So what's your family background? Have you got both parents still together? And was one of you more father oriented or were you brought up by a single parent? How did that work?

Rosie: Yeah our father passed away when we were very young, like baby age.

Nicola: Yeah.

Rosie: So it was mum basically until we had a stepdad at? I can't remember how old I was.

Nicola: I think I was about 12.

Rosie: 12, so I would have been 10.

Nicola: The golden years.

Rosie: That we bagged a stepdad. And they're still together. So there was a lot of aunties. My mum's got lots of sisters, so I feel like we spent a lot of time just going around aunties and nan.

Nicola: Cousins and stuff.

Rosie: And our nan was...

Nicola: A single parent.

Rosie: She was a single parent, well not the whole way through I don't think but.

Nicola: Her husband didn't die. But they divorced.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: So like she basically raised her six kids.

Rosie: Yeah it was very female wasn't it?

Nicola: Yeah.

Cathy: So was either of you rebellious? Or were you both rebellious? Did you kick off in your teenage years? Like Rachel stormed off to New York. Which one of you did that?

Nicola: That's amazing.

Rosie: How old were you when you stormed to New York?

Rachel: 18. So I just...

Cathy: She couldn't cope with me.

Rachel: Yeah I couldn't cope with Cath. So we really didn't get on as kids. Yeah Cath was tricky.

Cathy: I'm tricky.

Rachel: So I just basically watched lots of telly and thought I'll go to America, it's shiny there. Do you know what I mean, it will be lovely. And I au paired for a year and it was

absolutely horrific. It was awful. But actually it was better than [laughs] living in Cheltenham with you. So there was a good side to it. But yeah, I wasn't actually rebellious, I was normal. Whereas Cath wasn't. I had boyfriends, I snogged, you know, Cath didn't do any of that. But again you were sort of going along your own different paths I suppose, and not having flaming rows. Just getting on with your lives right?

Rosie: Yeah. We probably still have flaming rows.

Nicola: I remember like, I think I was about 13 or 14 and I think I didn't feel well and I was lying on the sofa. All of the fights in our house were about, who had the sofa, who had the remote control and who got MSN. That was what most things were. And we used to wind each other up a lot.

Rosie: We would really wind each other up.

Nicola: You'd find that little nugget that would like piss the other one off and you'd absolutely lean into it.

Rosie: [Laughs]

Nicola: And I felt sick, I was lying on the sofa, and you were just being a prick. And I think you'd gone into the kitchen and I just followed you and I think I brought my hand from like behind me and just swang it.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: And then immediately was like, oh dear, and legged it upstairs and locked myself in the bathroom.

Rosie: You had a lot of, I think you still do, have a lot of inside aggression [laughs].

Nicola: Oh thank you.

Cathy: Oh!

- Rosie: And there was another time where you put your fingers into my arms because I wouldn't get off MSN.
- Nicola: I don't remember that one actually, sorry.
- Rosie: I had like little semicircle moon marks on my arm where she's grabbed into my arm.
- Nicola: I'm so sorry.
- Cathy: Oh wow.
- Rosie: And you also had long fingernails.
- Nicola: I didn't have long fingernails. I didn't have long fingernails.
- Rosie: You did. She had long fingernails.
- Nicola: I didn't, I played the piano, I didn't have long fingernails.
- Rosie: You've heard it here first.
- Cathy: [Laughs]
- Rachel: Shall we let this carry on?
- Cathy: Yeah keep going, I want to know more. So you're full of rage and Rosie is not full of rage basically.
- Nicola: Oh she's absolutely perfect.
- Rosie: Oh no I'm full of rage, I did a lot sports so I think I just got mine out on the sports pitches.
- Nicola: Yeah you can't really get your anger out in choir [laughs].
- Rosie: Yeah but you were definitely [laughs] on your piano.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- [Here to Judge Theme Song]
- Priya: Hello, Here to Judge is a new weekly podcast from Little Wander where we dismantle predicaments posted online.

- Leila: Featuring spicy dilemmas from 'Am I the Asshole?' on Reddit.
- Robin: I haven't stopped giggling since you've said the word 'poops'.
- Priya: [Laughs]
- Robin: To "Am I being unreasonable?" quandaries on Mumsnet.
- Priya: I'm an adult, and I'm reading this aloud.
- Leila: [Laughs]
- Priya: Join me, Priya Hall.
- Robin: Me, Robin Morgan.
- Leila: And me, Leila Navabi. Subscribe to Here to Judge now on Apple, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts. I love this podcast so much.
- [I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]
- Rosie: You were definitely the more, like you would wear thick eyeliner under your eyes.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rosie: You went a little bit emo-y.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rosie: A little bit 'Don't talk to me'.
- Nicola: Mm.
- Rosie: 'Everything's shit!'
- Rachel: Can you remember each other's worst outfits? As teenagers or children actually. Because mine was, well I'm actually giving away mine.
- Cathy: Yeah, no let them speak.
- Rosie: [Laughs]

- Nicola: I've got no sense of style and I've never had any sense of style.
- Rosie: That's not always true.
- Nicola: That's fairly true.
- Rosie: You pull out some cool things.
- Nicola: But like in general.
- Cathy: But do you care? Do you care? I don't care so I look terrible. I genuinely don't care.
- Nicola: I think I look good and then I see a photo and I'm like, why did nobody tell me?
- Rosie: [Laughs]
- Nicola: I just don't. Like there are people who just know how to put outfits together and they know how to dress themselves and I just can't do it. And I'm also like really, really short so finding clothes to fit is like a struggle in itself. And I think I've just always been like that. When I was a kid I'd wear clothes and not realise that they looked massive and so I therefore looked insane. And I also like, my hair used to be really long and frizzy and straighteners hadn't come in, and I had braces and glasses, I just looked like Ugly Betty.
- Cathy: I think we're soulmates.
- Nicola: I think we might be.
- Rosie: I went through a tomboy stage where everything I wore was probably, like I used to hairspray my hair, I've got a massive forehead which is why I've got a fringe right now but. I wanted to be a boy, I just hair sprayed my hair to the back of my head, all my family used to call me helmet head. I'd wear boys clothes. I begged mum to buy me boxers from Asda, wanted to skateboard. This was when I was like in year seven or eight. And then started to find

more girly clothes and that was like Quick Silver and Roxy, those cool like.

Nicola: And in your transition you would borrow my clothes to get through.

Rosie: Yeah I'd still wear some of your clothes yeah.

Cathy: But were you ever embarrassed by each other?

Nicola: No.

Rosie: I don't think so.

Rachel: Because that's very different looks.

Nicola: They are very different.

Rosie: Yeah. I don't think I was embarrassed. Now you'll sometimes turn up in something and I'll be like 'Ugh bad choice'.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rachel: What about partners? Do you always like each other's partners? Or exes or whatever, do you tend to get on?

Nicola: We've never had any partners really to like.

Rosie: I had one at uni that I remember, do you remember Cyril Hall?

Nicola: Oh yeah, I went for a roast dinner with him.

Rosie: Yeah and I never actually really liked him. Sorry Cyril Hall, but that's no surprise to you. And I remember introducing, we went on a night or went to the bar at uni. And I remember thinking, he's not her type of person.

Nicola: Mm.

Rosie: But yeah we haven't actually like dated that much really.

Nicola: No and it's a thing I think as well where we just keep that, that's a thing that we just don't really discuss between each other.

Cathy: So you wouldn't talk about that with each other?

Nicola: As in at one point at the wedding you'd be like 'Oh by the way this is John'.

Cathy: Oh really?

Nicola: I think it's another way to like keep our lives separate. Because everything is so shared that you've got to keep some stuff that you're...

Rosie: But I would hope that I could have a boyfriend that you would want to hang out with.

Nicola: Oh yeah I don't mean like let's keep people under lock and key, like we're on dating apps or whatever but you wouldn't really talk about it that much.

Cathy: So if you met someone you would not phone the other up and go 'I met' you just wouldn't do that?

Rosie: We would. I'd be like 'I went on a date with someone, I really liked them, I want to go on a date again.' And I'd be like, 'Sorry Nicola I can't write a song today, I'm going to Alton Towers with John'.

All: [Laughs]

Nicola: Alton Towers, classy.

Rosie: But also when I'm dating people are always like 'Oh do you go for someone who likes what you do? Or likes comedy?' And part of me is like, I want to be with someone who doesn't have to see me live and still gets on with me. Because I want to be able to come home after a gig and chat with someone maybe not about the gig, about something else. Like to sort of keep, like if I

date a comedian then you only talk about comedy. How horrible is that?

Cathy: Never date a comedian.

Rosie: Oh God no, don't worry.

Nicola: You couldn't pay me enough money.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: Not that the offers are flooding it at all. They're really not. But.

Rosie: Red tape.

Rachel: But you're basically saying you've got to have enough areas of your life that are separate?

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: I think so, just so much of it is.

Rachel: Because I feel like that. I feel like we're in this rattled old marriage.

Rosie: Yeah [laughs]

Cathy: That's what it feels like.

Rachel: And it's that thing where you go, I am married and Cath does have a relationship and we each have a son but.

Cathy: I know it's miraculous.

Rosie: [Laughs]

Rachel: I know it's amazing she's let me as well. But I feel like that, you have to go away, you have to have some space to go out you know. Because we've got lots of mutual friends, obviously we're in the same business, so similar to you yeah. But you've got separate, whereas we have lots of mutual friends.

Cathy: Yeah definitely.

Rachel: We don't have lots of separation.

Rosie: Do you hang out together with your partners?

Cathy: Yes all the time, we go on holidays together.

Rachel: We go on holidays, yeah.

Rosie: Oh nice.

Cathy: Rachel is about to leave London and I'm so furious about it.

Rachel: Yeah. She wouldn't speak to me for a few day when I said that so.

Cathy: Yeah. It's the only reason I'm doing this podcast is to try and get her...

All: [Laughter]

Rachel: Even though you can do it remotely, you can do it from anywhere. But Cath was still like, well fuck that I'm pissed off. So yeah.

Cathy: Yeah. So is there any traits that you envy in the other? Something you wish you had?

Rosie: You're naturally more clever I think.

Nicola: Mm.

Rosie: I was more, I'd read the textbook and I'd study loads before the exam, and like check off everything that I had to know. But you could probably not listen in class and then go to the exam and still know the answers I reckon.

Nicola: Mm? I don't know.

Rosie: No she disagrees?

Nicola: Well I thought that was the case and then I sat my A-levels and fucked them based on that like, oh I'll be fine.

Rachel: Oh no.

Nicola: So like yeah. I don't know.

Rosie: What do you envy about me?

Nicola: Um? Oh you're very sociable.

Rosie: OK.

Nicola: She's like very personable and sociable and easy to talk to. And I think I'm quite standoffish and people, you can't hide it, people know that I look difficult to talk to because I am difficult to talk to like. I think I wear it quite obviously. Even if you've never met us, you could watch a show and be like, one of them is bubbly and one of them is not. And you'd be like, oh well glasses. So I think yeah I'd like to be more sociable. And you have more time for people in that same way where I'm like, 'I don't like anyone here, I'm not going to stay'.

Rosie: But you are very loyal though.

Nicola: I'm really loyal to the people that I love but if I like go to a party and there's no one there that I like, I will just leave.

Rachel: Rosie would you leave a party?

Cathy: No she's never going to leave a party.

Rachel: You're never going to leave a party obviously.

Rosie: I actually, I physically don't know how to leave a party.

Cathy: [Laughs]

Rosie: I can't go to bed until I know that everyone has left. I have to be the last.

Rachel: Oh!

Rosie: I'm really, really bad for 'last orders'. They call last orders at the bar, I'm literally sucking the taps until the whole place is out.

Cathy: Not now I hope.

- Rosie: Uh no, not now no. Well I'm sanitising the taps and then sucking them.
- Cathy: Exactly.
- Rachel: So who is the most competitive?
- Rosie: Me.
- Nicola: Rosie. Rosie once, we were playing a game of Frustration and she flipped the board and told our stepdad to go fuck himself.
- Rosie: [Laughs] No, I don't think it was Terry.
- Nicola: It was Terry.
- Rosie: Someone cheated and then, if anyone is going to cheat it's only going to be me. Don't you dare cheat on the game that I'm about to cheat on, do you know what I mean?
- Rachel: Yes. And Nicola you're just much more laidback?
- Nicola: I'm still competitive but Rosie is more competitive.
- Rosie: If we were playing a quiz, you'd be quietly competitive.
- Nicola: Mm hmm.
- Cathy: Right.
- Nicola: I'm annoyed when I've lost but I don't try and sabotage other people to win.
- Rosie: [Laughs]
- Nicola: I'm more angry that my own ability hasn't allowed me to win something but I feel like you get more angry that someone else is beating you.
- Rosie: Yeah.
- Cathy: Do you ever lie? Do you ever lie to each other?

Nicola: Probably.

Rosie: Maybe tell a white lie but.

Nicola: Yeah nothing massive.

Cathy: Oh you backed off there. 'Yeah we do lie. Oh no we don't'.

Nicola: Wait no we don't [laughs] I've definitely lied to you but nothing like huge.

Rosie: I would be something like 'I've been looking at the show all day' you hadn't been.

Nicola: Yeah.

Rosie: Like if we're writing something.

Nicola: The Google doc says it hasn't been edited in 36 hours.

Rosie: Yeah [laughs] Or like, I've been thinking about this idea, uh literally five minutes before this call, had a tiny little write down of some notes.

Nicola: Yeah.

Cathy: So there's nothing you want to come clean with the other now?

Rosie: Not really, no.

Nicola: I don't think there's anything exciting enough that even if I did it would be like 'Oh I've still got your jumper that I nicked a couple of years ago'. But I don't even have that.

Rosie: Yeah. In the job that we do there's not really much to lie about because we see every email. We do everything together. We're at every gig together. There's not a lot of margin for a lie. Because we're all eyes on everything together at the same time so. So in our career that's the case. But in general, in childhood times there's probably a million things I've lied to you about but I don't remember them.

Rachel: Who is most like to fall over?

Nicola: Oh me. I'm not going to show you my knee. On Tuesday night? No last Thursday, we were doing a gig and I skipped onto the stage and unstacked it immediately and I've got a massive egg on my right knee and then a huge bruise on my left leg.

Cathy: Oh.

Nicola: I fall over all the time.

Rosie: Every time we do a gig that we're nervous I always whisper in her ear just before we walk on saying 'I hope you fall down the stairs'.

All: [Laughter]

Cathy: Aww.

Nicola: That's the only tradition I think we have. You say 'I hope you fall down the stairs' and I say 'I hope you have the worst show of your life'.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: So we never hug.

Rosie: Hello everybody...

Cathy: Have you ever done a gig where you just go 'Fuck you, I'm not going on'?

Nicola: We've had like small moments. Was it? We went to do a song and you'd like left, like your egg shake or something offstage. So she had to leave the stage to go and get it and it was the scariest one minute of my life where I was like, I can't do this. I can't talk to people. I can't talk to people and she can't play the piano. So without the other one, it's really shit for the audience, like it's just terrible. So I don't think she did, thank fucking God I would have left the stage.

Rosie: Yeah.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Rachel: Nicola, do you feel a responsibility being the older sister? Do you feel a responsibility towards Rosie? Because I've never asked you that, whether you feel a responsibility towards me?

Cathy: Oh I don't, but you feel a huge responsibility towards me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Rosie: Who is the older one out of you two?

Rachel: Cath.

Cathy: I'm the eldest, but mentally Rachel, actually me.

All: [Laughter]

Rachel: Yeah so. But I've never, ever asked that and never thought about it. And I'm thinking with you two. So yeah, Nicola do you feel a responsibility towards Rosie because you are the older sister?

Nicola: Um?

Rachel: How does that feel? I can't imagine.

Nicola: Not as the older sibling, but just as like as kids you're like 'Oh that's my little sister' but now if I feel a responsibility it's not because you're my younger sister I don't think.

Rosie: Mm.

Nicola: I think it's more of like, oh it looks like she's having a bad day, are you sure this is OK? Or like we don't have to say yes to this, or we don't have to do that. But it's not because she's my younger sister, it's just like that's like more of a work thing than it is of like, oh I have to take care of you because is I don't mum is going to kick off sort of thing.

- Rosie: And we also never grew up, I don't think I ever went to you for advice.
- Nicola: No.
- Rosie: There was never like the older sister helping the younger sister out. Like not in a mean way but that...
- Nicola: Wasn't a dynamic.
- Rosie: I'd never go to Nicola and be like 'Oh I need your help with this'.
- Nicola: No one should ever come to me for advice ever but [laughs].
- Cathy: Why did you not go to her for advice? I'm surprised.
- Rosie: I don't know. I think because I probably worked it out already myself or been like 'I'll sort this out, I'll deal with it, I know what's the right thing to do kind of thing'. So I never kind of needed you in that way.
- Nicola: Mm.
- Rosie: I think? Yeah I don't think I ever came to you.
- Rachel: Who's most likely to complain to a waiter? I can't decide, I'm trying to think if I could judge that.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rosie: No I never would complain to a waiter.
- Nicola: Actually we'd probably both stick our heads in the sand.
- Rosie: Yeah if the food is cold, I'll eat the cold food.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rosie: They'll walk away and I'll say 'For fuck sake it's cold' but I'll eat it.

- Nicola: We went out to dinner yesterday and they brought, I think they were supposed to be pork dumplings. I'd ordered pork dumplings...
- Rosie: She loves a dumpling, that's one thing you should know about.
- Nicola: Fucking love dumplings. And she like put the plate down and was like 'Chicken dumplings' and walked away. And Rosie was like 'Won't those supposed to be pork?'
- Rosie: [Laughs]
- Nicola: I was like 'Yup'. And then ate them, like, chicken's fine.
- Cathy: [Laughs] Whereas I'd get Rachel to complain and I would never complain. But I would make Rachel do it.
- Rachel: That's weird that neither of you complain though. You're both the same on that.
- Rosie: Yeah that's weird.
- Nicola: We could be so much further in life if either of us had any kind of faith in ourselves as human beings [laughs].
- Rosie: Yeah. I hate confrontation.
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rosie: We're both really bad with confrontation.
- Nicola: Mm.
- Rosie: Really bad. It makes me shiver thinking that I'll ever have to confront someone.
- Cathy: No you're good with it Rach.
- Nicola: Even like when we're doing shows and stuff when people like set something or like they'll do it wrong. And Rosie will be like 'Isn't that a bit too high? Isn't your piano too high? Or isn't that pedal in the wrong place?' Actually it's when we drank too much at Melbourne Comedy Festival

and they'd wheeled the piano up. We'd done tech and everything had been like labelled and put in the right place. And then when it got to the actual show, the piano was like way off to one side, but we'd been told 'You've got this much time' and we knew that we were really up to it anyway. So rather than fuss about and move things to where they needed to be, I played the whole thing with the piano like way off to the left so I look like I'm fucking hula dancing all the way through.

All: [Laughter]

Nicola: Like, it just looks really odd when you're like, why is she playing everything to the left? It just looked weird.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: But at the time, I was like 'We'll disrupt the show. We don't have enough time anyway, it's probably playable just work it out'. And now there's a video on the internet we're like I just look like a fucking nutcase.

Rosie: It doesn't look that bad actually.

Nicola: It doesn't but when you look at it you're like, if you'd just said something, you could have played that and looked like a normal human. And instead I was like 'I'll figure it out' [laughs] Like OK great.

Rachel: And is that changing as time's gone?

Nicola: No.

Rachel: No.

Rosie: Sometimes her agent is like 'Just spend the time, when you go out and if you're filming something if it goes wrong, you're allowed to stop and do it again'. We'd be like, no, no, no, get through the song, get through the song and run off the stage before anyone can like scream at you. I don't think it has got better. Maybe we take one second extra to regain a breath.

Nicola: Mm.

Rosie: But no still, just scared to be alive actually is the headline news there.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Cathy: Oh I know that one. Who is happier?

Nicola: Oh? I'll say that I'm not unhappy.

Rosie: I'm not unhappy.

Nicola: I think that's a good place to be as a human.

Rosie: Who's happier?

Cathy: Oh OK that's really balanced and good.

Rosie: Yeah. I probably smile more.

Rachel: We sound like therapists.

Nicola: You definitely smile more.

Rosie: But that doesn't necessarily mean I'm happy [laughs].

Nicola: [Laughs] That's true.

Rosie: Yeah, I'd say probably similar, we find our happiness in different bits. I think?

Nicola: Yeah I think so. My mum used to think that I was a really unhappy baby.

Rosie: Did she?

Nicola: Like as a kid, I don't know why. Like she dropped it in a conversation a couple of years ago and was like 'Of course you were a very unhappy child' and I was like, I thought I was pretty fucking happy actually.

Rosie: [Laughs]

Nicola: Like I don't have any complaints. But maybe I've just been like wearing it on my face since I was like six, that I just

look unhappy all the time, but actually I'm having a lovely day.

Rachel: How is Christmas for you two? Give us a sense of your Christmases.

Rosie: Christmas was, and still is the best day of the year. I bloody love Christmas. That feeling has never gone away for me. Christmas day, it's never going anywhere I don't think. We'd come down, probably early in the morning. We'd always get stockings at the end of our bed. Mum would do stockings and put like little bits in them. Like a Gerri Halliwell CD, probably popping out of the top.

Cathy: Oh yeah.

Rosie: I have always had, and it's still a tradition, a bag of pick & mix. I always get a bag of pick & mix in my stocking and you'll always get white chocolate or something.

Nicola: Mm-hmm.

Rosie: Go downstairs. Oh, there was a period of time where we always had to go to church.

Nicola: Mm.

Rosie: Ugh. And then, but don't have to do that anymore. As adult women we can make our own choices about that.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Cathy: Can I ask, whose house you're in now?

Nicola: Rosie's.

Rosie: My one.

Cathy: OK interesting, Rachel will always have to come to me to do anything. I've got a nicer house.

Rachel: Yeah she said 'I don't really like your house' so I said 'OK' then that's why.

Nicola: That's sort of how we've always been.

Rosie: Yeah your flat last time wasn't very nice.

Nicola: I had a flat. Rosie was in a house and I was in a flat, which was just like one room. So it was just impossible.

Rosie: There wasn't a lot of airflow coming through.

Nicola: It was just quite small. And then I've only just moved into a new place and I don't really know my roommates so it feels a bit weird to.

Cathy: You wouldn't live together? You don't want to live together?

Nicola: No.

Rosie: We did it in Toronto.

Nicola: Yeah in Toronto we did it for like three years. And again it's just like why? I think was so many like, people think that there are lots of, I think they see a sibling double act, especially musical comedians which is like embarrassing enough as it is. And then to like layer on, oh you're also siblings and you're adults, oh that's a shame. So like the more stereotypes that people probably think are true that you can go 'Actually no, we don't live together'. And yeah we just spend all day, every day doing work together. And we were just like, let's just have some fucking space for a bit.

Rosie: Yeah.

Rachel: You've got to have something else to say to each other right? That's my view.

Rosie: Yes.

Nicola: And just somewhere else, another house to storm off to.

Cathy: Is there anything that you've never said to the other, that you want to say now?

Rosie: That is a good question. This is going to sound cheesy but there are some times where I'm really grateful that you've done something, and I'll be like 'Thanks for doing it' and then I'll come home and I'll be like, I hope she knows that I was really thankful that she did that.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rosie: And then you go back and you're like 'I really wanted to let you know that I actually had a really great time, thank you so much' and they're like, yeah we understand.

Nicola: Bruce Forsyth.

Rosie: Yeah when Bruce Forsyth comes out with my mouth and 'We had a really great time'.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rosie: That does sound cheesy because we actually can be quite mean to each other.

Nicola: Mm yeah. When you won't even hug each other it just feels like a strange thing to be overly effusive about anything really.

Rosie: Yeah.

Rachel: But that hugging thing has made me feel a bit better.

Nicola: Yeah.

Cathy: I wouldn't go near Rachel.

Rosie: When was the last time you guys hugged?

Rachel: Oh we've never hugged.

Cathy: Never hugged.

Rachel: Even we move apart even talking.

Cathy: I'd be upset if she touched me on a sofa.

Rosie: Yeah, every now and again we'll do that and you're like 'Oh Jesus, why did you do that?'

Nicola: Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Rosie: Or we have to share a bed a lot, especially in the first couple of years if we were touring or at Edinburgh Fringe. That was one of our biggest expenses, if you wanted to get two hotel rooms and the only way we could really tour or do Fringe is if we shared a bed. And we'd roll over in the night and the other one is facing you. And that would be one of the worst things I could ever experience.

Nicola: It made me so sad.

Cathy: Oh I'm OK with that.

Rachel: No you're right, we have shared beds.

Cathy: We shared beds.

Rachel: And that's OK.

Cathy: And I'm OK with that but Rachel...

Rachel: Yeah that's because I don't move! I sleep like this.

Cathy: And also Rachel talks all night, that's all she does.

Nicola: Fucking hell, so does Rosie.

Rosie: This is so funny, I sleep talk.

Nicola: And Rosie does this thing, if she's sleep talking where she'll ask a question and if you don't answer it, she'll tap you on the shoulder...

Cathy: Oh no.

Nicola: ...for an answer, where you're like 'Fuck off'.

Rosie: [Laughs]

- Nicola: Aww, the amount of times I've nearly punched her in like a fucking Nottingham Travelodge because she want to know like where her friend Jess is. And you're like 'I don't fucking know'.
- Cathy: Oh wow.
- Nicola: And you'll try and ignore it and she'll wait. So you have to be like 'Have you checked the wardrobe?' And then she'll fuck off and go to sleep. But you have to give her an answer and it pisses me off so much. It's just that.
- Rosie: [Laughs]
- Cathy: That's weird.
- Nicola: A little tiny tap and I'm like, you've got to fuck off away from me.
- Cathy: And that's in your sleep?
- Nicola: Yeah.
- Rachel: Yeah. Did you ever share a room when you were kids?
- Nicola: When we were really, really young, we had bunk beds when we were kids.
- Rosie: Bunk beds yeah. Did you have bunk beds?
- Cathy: No. No.
- Rosie: Oh, when I think about bunk beds, they're a gift to kids, they're the funnest things in the world.
- Cathy: Oh I disagree I think they're horrible.
- Rachel: They're amazing.
- Rosie: You'd get to fall out of them, jump out. We'd put all your pillows on the floor and jump from the top bunk and smash your head.
- Nicola: [Laughs]

Cathy: Oh no.

Rosie: Oh I loved bunk beds, climbing, they were just monkey bars.

Rachel: Can I just go sorry, go back to the sharing a bed.

Rosie: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Did you ever share a bed...

Cathy: Did either of you try and shag the other in the night like Rachel? Hey maybe.

Nicola: [Laughs]

Rachel: Oh fucking hell.

Nicola: This is the podcast where we reveal that we're sisters who fuck.

Rosie: Yeah.

Nicola: This definitely will have the most plays.

Rachel: Yeah exactly...

[I Wish I Was An Only Child Theme Music]

Melanie: This has been a Little Wander production. Local artwork from Cathy Mason. Voice from Melanie Walters. Music from Rhodri Viney. With special thanks to Beth Forrest, Steve Pickup, Sam Roberts, Henry Widdicombe, and Jo Williams. Other podcasts from Little Wander include: Here to Judge, and Welcome to Spooktown. Subscribe now on iTunes, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

Rachel: That's why, and I punched the vicar apparently.

[End of Podcast]